



# Department of Justice

United States Attorney Gregory G. Lockhart  
Southern District of Ohio

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 13, 2007  
<http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/ohs>

CONTACT: Fred Alverson  
Tel: 614-469-5715

## **FORMER POLICE OFFICER PLEADS GUILTY TO BANK FRAUD**

COLUMBUS – James L. Cook, age 49, of Whitehall pleaded guilty in United States District Court here today to one count of bank fraud for depositing a counterfeit check into his checking account and authorizing withdrawals from his account based on the counterfeit check. At the time, Cook was an officer with the Whitehall Police Department.

Gregory G. Lockhart, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Ohio and Timothy P. Murphy, Special Agent in Charge, Federal Bureau of Investigation, announced the guilty plea entered today before United States District Judge Michael H. Watson.

According to a statement of facts filed with Cook's plea, he opened an account at Key Bank on South Hamilton Road on September 25, 2005 with a \$50 deposit.

On or about October 27, 2005, Cook deposited a counterfeit check for \$25,273.04 into his account using an ATM. The check made out to him was drawn on a Bank of America account for New Sentry Marketing, Inc., Newtown, PA. The check was returned unpaid to Key Bank.

Cook authorized 59 Internet withdrawals totaling \$3,400 from the account between October 27, 2005 and October 31, 2005. On or about November 15, 2005, Cook, wearing his Whitehall Police uniform, went to the Key Bank and recovered the counterfeit check. Cook told bank personnel that he would initiate an investigation of the fraudulent check. Instead, Cook left the bank and shredded the check.

Bank fraud carries a maximum punishment of 30 years imprisonment and a fine of up to \$1 million. The actual sentence will be determined by Judge Watson.

Cook remains free on bond pending sentencing.

Lockhart commended the FBI agents who investigated the case, and acknowledged the cooperation of the Whitehall Police Department in the investigation.

# # #